

ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE.

BY HOWARD MARCUS STRONG.

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The corpulent padre of Las Cruces was awakened from his midday slumber by the movement of a swarm of sand flies over his moist face.

"Plagues of Egypt!" he cried, starting up and slapping viciously at the insects. "Is there no rest for the servant of God? Ten thousand curses on these pests!"

Having bathed his smarting face with a soothing lotion, he hastened across the sandy road to his little adobe chapel.

There was a gentle rustle in one of the dim corners as the padre moved up the aisle, then a smothered laugh, mingled with the deeper tones of a man's voice. The padre paused to listen.

"Who laughs in the house of God?" he demanded sternly. "This is the place for prayer and penitence."

"It is Poca Rosa who laughs, holy father. You will not be angry with me!"

"But who is with you?" "Senior Americano."

"I hope we have not displeased you, Padre Miguel?" said a tall man, stepping out from the shadow. "The heat is so terrible outside."

"Blistered Dives, so it is!" said the padre, feeling his bitten face. "So it is, but the senior and little Rosa should

cried the sleeper, waking suddenly. "Is there no rest for—Oh, Hueco, you! What is it now?"

"I have killed another Americano, father. Another white livered dog has been sent to hades. I come to confess."

The padre glanced nervously in the direction of the dark corner. Then he led Hueco into a little room behind the altar.

"And he's been killing more Americans, has he?" mused Miles. "Heaven! What snakes these Mexicans are!"

"Not me," whispered Poca Rosa. "No, not you, dear little Rosa," he said. "You are as harmless as the singing birds," and he gently stroked her tear moist cheek.

"We must go," she said, sobbing. "He will see us as he comes out."

"All right, little girl," Miles replied. "Just as you think best."

The big American stood in the chapel doorway and watched the little form of the Mexican girl until she disappeared around a corner.

"What a fool a fellow will make of himself!" he laughed. "I'm sorry the girl takes everything so seriously. So I've deposed the murderous Hueco, have I? Well, suppose we have a look at this Greaser."

of your penance?" replied Padre Miguel sternly. "Do as I command you or suffer full punishment for your sins."

"I will go," said Hueco.

Padre Miguel was above all things, a practical man. He believed in the power of penitence and prayer, and he was also firmly convinced of the benefits of applied means.

That night he hastened to the ganget gallow, which loomed up far out over the sandy plain. He reached his destination just as the heavy darkness settled down over the surrounding country.

Up one side of the scaffold ran a rough ladder, and up this ladder the padre toiled with his weight of flesh. After reaching the cross beam at the top the good man sat down and cautiously moved himself out to a point about midway between the uprights. Then he waited. The seat was narrow and perilous. Padre Miguel grew impatient.

"Died!" he groaned as the moments dragged along. "I am cut in halves. The dog! Why has he not come?"

From beneath his robe the padre drew a strong rawhide lariat. One end was tied about his ample wrist, the other formed a running noose.

"Ah, I shall give him a fright!" chuckled the padre between twinges of pain. "The saints be praised! There he is now!"

A dim figure moved slowly to a point directly beneath the cross beam of the gallow and knelt down.

The padre had intended to wait until the prescribed prayers were said, but he grew impatient and determined upon immediate action. Inch by inch he lowered the noosed end of the lariat.

Finally it hung even with the penitent's neck. A deft twist, and it was over Hueco's head. A sharp jerk, and it was biting his neck.

"Mother of God!" shrieked Hueco, struggling madly to tear off the noose. "Help! I must not die yet! The prayers are not said!"

Padre Miguel threw his weight against the lariat and managed to hold the frenzied man in check.

Hueco screamed and prayed and cursed and cried.

In the excitement of the moment the padre leaned back farther and farther, forgetting the narrowness of the beam on which he was seated. There was a sudden slackening of the lariat; the padre whirled backward and shot down to the ground, 20 feet below.

"Merciful heaven!" groaned Padre Miguel as soon as he regained consciousness. "This lariat is cutting me in two, but what of the poor devil on the other end?"

By a great effort he turned himself over on his back and looked up. Directly above him Hueco was dangling by the neck from the cross beam.

"God have mercy on this sinful soul!" cried the padre. "I have become his hangman by the direction of Providence."

As quickly as possible Padre Miguel untied the lariat from his own waist and lowered the body of Hueco to the ground. Then he fled to the seclusion of his little chapel.

All that night and the following day he fasted and prayed, interspersing the ritual with many pertinent ejaculations.

The body of Hueco was found and discussed. The execution was unhesitatingly attributed to some supernatural agency; hence the inhabitants of Las Cruces now have a tale that's worth the telling.

William's Postoffice.

The German emperor has a little postoffice of his own, with officials detailed especially to handle the voluminous postal matter that comes every day addressed to him. All letters are classified under the three heads, "Private," "Official," and "Immediate."

Private letters are handed over to the emperor unopened, those marked "Official" land in the civil cabinet of the Kaiser if they contain petitions by civilians, while those of a military character go to the military cabinet. Chiefs of these two departments make all the necessary inquiries regarding the communications and then prepare the answers in accordance with the regulations for official letters. These answers are taken to the emperor, who expresses his approval by affixing his signature. Answers are then dispatched by special messengers to their destinations. The messengers used in this service are the most trustworthy men who can be found.

Very Upsetting.

There is an office building downtown which might be advertised as furnishing all the comforts of home and some of the amusements of the circus. The ceilings of its broad corridors are made of large mirrors, and the pedestrian has the pleasure of seeing himself in reflection walking by fashion along the ceiling. It is hardest on the employees who scrub the floors. They have a bucket full of water upside down above them all the time. It is useless to try to pass through that hall without looking up. In some respects it is as good as a trip to sea. Possibly tenants in that building will learn to walk on their hands, and then at least they will be feet down on the ceiling and ready for any penalty the laws of gravity may inflict. —New York Commercial Advertiser.

Bad For the Other Fellow.

"Billings is a man who has absolutely the poorest taste of anybody I ever knew."

"How's that?"

"He gave his divorced wife a book entitled 'How to Manage a Husband' as a wedding present when she got married the second time." —Chicago News.

Why She Yowled.

"Johann, I wish you'd put the seat out of the room! I can't work with this constant howling. Where is the beast anyway?"

"Won't you stand up, professor? I think you are sitting on her!" —The Seattle Blatter.

Bankers Try Sorcery.

Not being able to trace anything in connection with the loss of Rs. 2,000 from the cash safe of the Surat Bazaar company, the directors recently resorted to astrology and finally to sorcery. Every employee of the bazaar got a mouthful of rice to eat which had been previously put through some magic preparation, the belief being that if the person who had taken the money ate the rice some great misfortune would befall him. It is not recorded that any of the employees have yet met with a disaster.

The Year 1810 Bore Notables.

The year 1810, in which the late duke of Northumberland was born, seems to have produced a long-lived race, for there still remain four peers who date their birth from it—Lord Tankerville, Lord Gwydyr, Lord Maxborough and Lord Armstrong.

Killed By Shakespeare.

How many important personages did Shakespeare kill? In his works the great dramatist despatched about ninety altogether, each one of whom rejoiced in a name. Of course hundreds of minor individuals were slaughtered wholesale on the field of battle and elsewhere. Of the ninety at least two-thirds died by cold steel, twelve from old age or natural decay, seven by decapitation, five by poison, two suffocation (or three if you include Desdemona), two by strangling, three by snake bite, one from a fall, one by drowning and one, Horner, the armourer, by being banged to death by a sundbag. There are living authors quite as deadly, not perhaps to the characters in their books, but to the people who read them.

Time He Was Married.

A recent wedding in the provinces was so much interrupted that the friends of the wedded pair found special reason to congratulate them when the ceremony was at last over. All went merrily until the bridegroom was called upon to produce the wedding ring. In vain he felt in his trousers pocket for the indispensable article. Nothing could be found except a hole through which the ring had evidently fallen into the high boot which is affected by young men of the district. What was he to do?

"Take your boot off, said the parson.

The suspense and silence were painful.

The organist, at the priests bidding, struck up a voluntary.

The young man removed his boot, the ring was found, also a hole in his stocking and the worthy minister remarked, evidently with more than the delay of the ceremony in mind:

"Young man, it is time you were married." —Spare Moments.

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Baptist—R. D. Wilson, pastor; Services every Sunday 11 a. m. and 7:15 p. m.; Sunday school 9:45 a. m.; prayer-meeting Thursday night.

Methodist—J. B. Cochran, pastor; Services 11 a. m. and 7 p. m. Sunday; Sunday school 9:45 a. m.; Epworth League Sunday 4 p. m.; prayer-meeting Tuesday night.

St. Andrews' Episcopal—Rev. Herbert E. Bowers, L. L. D., rector. Holy communion first Sunday in the month.

Services—First and third Sunday in each month, morning and evening and also morning of fourth Sunday. Other Sundays and each fifth Sunday the rector officiates at Navasota.

Presbyterian—J. D. West, pastor; Services morning and evening 1st, 3rd and 4th Sunday in each month; Sunday school 9:45 a. m.; prayer-meeting Wednesday night.

Christian, J. L. Andrews, pastor—Services 11 a. m. and 7:15 p. m. Sunday; Sunday school 9:45 a. m.; Christian Endeavor 3 p. m. Sunday; prayer meeting Wednesday night.

Free Communion Baptist—A. M. Stewart, pastor; Services every Sunday night in each month; Sunday school 10 a. m.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church—Father Pelmar, pastor; Mass at 8 and 10 a. m. Sunday.

LODGE MEETINGS.

Brazos Camp, No. 104, W. of W.—Meet second and fourth Friday nights in each month. W. R. Johnston, C. C.; Joe B. Reed, clerk.

Bryan Tent No. 16, K. O. T. M.—Meeting nights first and third Monday each month. J. H. Mawhinney, C.; Joe B. Reed, R. E.

Bryan Lodge No. 980, Home Forum—Meeting nights second and fourth Wednesday each month. W. T. James, pres't; Joe B. Reed, financier.

Bryan Lodge No. 409, National Aid—Meeting nights first and third Wednesday in each month. W. W. Griffin, pres't; B. W. Downard, sec.

Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8, Knight Templars—Meet 2nd Tuesday in each month. A. M. Rhodes, E. C.; H. G. Rhodes, Secretary.

W. T. Austin Chapter No. 87, R. A. M.—Meets third Monday in each month. N. R. Cole, H. P.; Joe B. Reed, Sec'y.

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